To maintain your status, you must:

I-94 must be updated and maintained to reflect ongoing valid immigration status. (If you leave the country, you would need to renew your visa to re-enter.) However, your SEVIS record (I-20) and allowed to enter or re-enter the United States in the designated status. If the visa expiration occurs while you are in the United States, it

Your visa does not need to remain valid once you have entered the United States. (The expiration date of the visa applies only to the time and I-94 is required with a petition for any change of status.) You will then be subject to conditions associated with the new status.

Failure to comply with immigration regulations will retroactively place you out of status and in violation of U.S. immigration laws. Students who fall out of status must apply for reinstatement and will likely be asked to leave the country and re-enter with new documentation. They also may be barred from re-entry for a period of three years or longer if an immigration judge or the service finds them in violation.

(over)
SEVIS AND SEVP

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is an internet based system used by the U.S. government, and is administered by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to track issuance of I-20s, arrivals and departures, as well as continued enrollment, practical training, and other related activities of F-1 visa holders. All I-20s are generated in the SEVIS system and are specific to the schools certifying the students as acceptable to their institution.

Please note that a student may be issued separate I-20s from several schools, but once a student uses a particular school’s I-20 to apply for a visa, all other school I-20s will become invalid and only the SEVIS record used to obtain the visa will remain valid. If you change schools after initial attendance at the designated school, your unique SEVIS record will need to be transferred to the new school. Your SEVIS record with its unique SEVIS number will remain with you until completion of your stay as a student. However, if you leave the country and interrupt your studies for an extended period (more than 5 months), a new SEVIS record will need to be issued.

DESIGNATED SCHOOL OFFICIALS (DSO)

Only a limited number of individuals from a given school are approved for access to SEVIS records and are authorized to submit requests for I-20s. Knox has DSOs in the Office of Admission, Office of International Student Services, and Office of the Registrar. It is important for you to know who the DSOs are and be sure to communicate any changes in your contact information, change of program, need for authorization for travel, or special circumstances that may impact the maintenance of your student status.

TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

If you wish to transfer schools before completing your designated course of study, you must first notify a DSO at Knox of your intent to transfer, providing any information required for release of your I-20. The DSO at Knox will need to revise your record in SEVIS, designate the new school, and provide a release date. The SEVIS system will alert the new school that your SEVIS record has been transferred at which time the DSO at the new school will be able to access your record, revise it, and issue a new I-20 either prior to or after you arrive at the new school. You are required to contact the DSO at the new school within 15 days of the program start date indicated on the new I-20 to confirm the transfer in the SEVIS system.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Whenever you plan to leave the United States, you must consult with the International Student Advisor (DSO) in the Office of International Student Services and either obtain a new I-20 or have the current one endorsed (signed) for travel at least two weeks before the travel date.

If you wish to travel outside the United States during term breaks, you should seek endorsement before the break. You should also remember that for re-entry you must have a valid visa and a passport valid for at least six months. If you were issued a one-time entry or have an expired visa, you will need to renew your visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad in order to re-enter the United States.

If your passport is within six months of expiration, you may need to renew your passport as well.

When you arrive at the port of entry to the United States for re-entry, you will need to present your travel documents for inspection just as required for initial entry.

TRAVEL TO AND FROM CANADA, MEXICO, AND NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

Travel to these destinations is handled differently than travel to other countries. A valid passport is required for entry to Canada. Students from certain countries will need a Canadian entry visa to enter Canada and should check with the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. before traveling to Canada (www.canadainternational.gc.ca).

If you plan to travel for fewer than 30 days to Canada, Mexico, or neighboring islands (Bermuda, Bahamas, and all Caribbean islands except Cuba), you may be able to re-enter the United States even if the visa in your passport has expired provided you have a valid I-94 and endorsed I-20. You should check with the International Student Advisor at Knox before departure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more detailed information about applying for a visa and paying the required I-901 SEVIS fee, see the accompanying instructions and references to links at the Department of State website (https://educationusa.state.gov). Please note that the instructions on page three of your I-20 do not reflect recent changes in procedures. Consult your local U.S. Embassy, the SEVIS website, or the Office of Admission at Knox College for up-to-date information and instructions.

If you have questions, please contact Josh Ferchau, director of international student admission at Knox College, at jferchau@knox.edu or by phone at +1-309-341-7136.